

Defense Post Offer SEChronicle MAY 4 1973

Nixon Wants Packard

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Washington

David Packard, the multi-millionaire San Francisco businessman who ac-

cording to widespread rumors will become America's next Secretary of Defense, conferred here with President Nixon yesterday.

The former deputy secre-

tary of defense has been under heavy pressure to take over the number one Pentagon job.

(Contained at San Francisco International Airport last night on his return, the 60-year-old board chairman of Palo Alto's Hewlett-Packard Co. declined to comment on his conference with the president.)

Earlier this week Packard said he had turned down requests to accept a federal post and had decided to remain as board chairman of Hewlett-Packard Co. of Palo Alto.

There have been reports since Elliot L. Richardson was shifted from Secretary of Defense to Attorney General that Packard was the administration's top choice for a replacement.

SOURCES

It was confirmed yesterday through unimpeachable sources that the reports of the offer to the millionaire executive were correct.

"All signs I can read would indicate that he is the President's first choice," one source said.

It is known that Packard had enthusiastic support from former Secretary of

Defense Melvin Laird. Packard had served under Laird for nearly three years until he resigned in late 1961.

Laird called Packard "the best man in America for the job."

Packard, who began his electronics plant in a suburban garage with his friend, William Hewlett, became one of the Bay Area's most successful manufacturers.

His stock in the 34-year-old firm was estimated last year as having risen in value to nearly \$600 million.

YEARS

He has been active in Republican circles for some years and last year was responsible for President Nixon's presidential campaign in the Bay Area.

He also is active in charitable and civic affairs and is a major contributor to Stanford University, where he was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate and a varsity football and basketball player.

Packard also carries a priceless asset to an administration seeking to replace officials who have resigned in the wake of the Watergate episode. Packard is known not only as a superb administrator but as a man of unshakeable integrity.



DAVID PACKARD
Trip to Washington